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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 4021st meeting of the Security Council, held on 8 July 1999 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Maintenance of peace and security and post-conflict peace-building" the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council recalls its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council also recalls the statements made by its President in relation to activities of the United Nations in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building.

"The Security Council has considered the matter of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment as part of its overall and continuing effort to contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping and peace-building activities in conflict situations around the world.

"The Security Council is seriously concerned that in a number of conflicts, armed fighting among various parties or factions continues despite the conclusion of peace agreements by the warring parties and the presence of United Nations peacekeeping missions on the ground. It recognizes that a major contributory factor to such a situation has been the continued availability of large amounts of armaments, in particular small arms and light weapons, to conflicting parties. The Council emphasizes that in order to achieve settlement, parties to a conflict must work towards the successful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, including child soldiers whose special needs should be seriously addressed.

"The Security Council recognizes that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration cannot be seen in isolation but rather, as a continuous process which is rooted in and feeds into a broader search for peace, stability and development. Effective disarmament of ex-combatants represents an important indicator of progress towards post-conflict peace-building and normalization of the situation. The demobilization effort is only possible when there is some level of disarmament and its success can only be achieved when there is effective rehabilitation and reintegration

into society of ex-combatants. Disarmament and demobilization must take place in a secure and safe environment, which will give ex-combatants the confidence to lay down their arms. Taking into account that the process is closely linked to economic and social issues, the question must be addressed comprehensively so as to facilitate a smooth transition from peacekeeping to peace-building.

"The Security Council emphasizes that for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to be successful, there must be political will and a clear commitment by the parties concerned to achieve peace and stability. At the same time, it is vital that such commitment by the parties be reinforced by political will and consistent, effective and determined support from the international community to guarantee the achievement of sustainable peace, including through its contributions of long-term assistance for development and trade.

"The Security Council affirms its commitment to the principles of the political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States in conducting peace-building activities, and the need for States to comply with their obligations under international law. Bearing this in mind, the Council stresses the need for the implementation, with the consent of the parties, of practical measures to promote the success of the process which, inter alia, may include the following:

"(a) The inclusion, as appropriate, within specific peace agreements and, on a case-by-case basis, within United Nations peacekeeping mandates, of clear terms for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, including the safe and timely disposal of arms and ammunition;

"(b) The establishment by Governments contributing to peacekeeping operations of databases of experts on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. In this context, training in disarmament and demobilization could be a useful component of national programmes for the preparation of peacekeeping troops;

"(c) The prevention and reduction of the excessive and destabilizing flow, accumulation and illegitimate use of small arms and light weapons. In this context, the relevant Security Council resolutions and existing United Nations arms embargoes should be strictly implemented.

"The Security Council is of the view that techniques for executing and coordinating programmes related to the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants and the problems associated with it should be given in-depth consideration. It takes note with appreciation of the efforts by the Secretary-General, United Nations bodies, Member States and international and regional organizations aimed at developing general principles and practical guidelines for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in a peacekeeping environment.

"The Security Council underlines the need to address this issue on a regular basis, and in this regard, requests the Secretary-General to submit to the Council, within a period of six months, a report containing his analysis, observations and recommendations, in particular those relating to principles and guidelines as well as practices, experiences and lessons learned to facilitate its further consideration of the matter. The report should pay special attention to the problems of disarmament and demobilization of child soldiers and their reintegration into society.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter."